



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED
OFFICE OF STUDENT INVOLVEMENT
GRANITE PASS 163
MERCED, CA
(209) 228-2584

February 10th, 2021

Subject Line: Spring 2021 Testing & Health Practices On and Off Campus

Dear UC Merced RCO Community,

No matter where you are, your health is our top concern. We've included many specific links and information, and you can also consult the [University's COVID-19 webpage](#) for more information and updates.

No matter where you live, please follow the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and local public health guidelines. We strongly encourage you to err on the side of caution (even if facial coverings aren't required where you are, it's a good idea to wear one). You can find COVID-19 resources and policies, including necessary health and safety precautions and how to obtain more information from health care providers, state health authorities, and a link to the [CDC's COVID-19 web site](#) on the UC Merced [Coronavirus page](#). If you are interested in learning about UC Merced's COVID-19 Statistics, please [follow this link](#).

Additionally, please review the [campus ready](#) webpage to learn how to do your part.

MERCED & BOBCAT PLEDGE

The Office of Student Involvement has created the [BOBCAT Pledge](#) and [M.E.R.C.E.D. Pledge](#) for our registered clubs and organizations. The pledge creates a shared understanding of the expectations in our community and helps us hold each other accountable for the measures that will be taken to protect the community. We encourage you to be a leader of your organization and take the pledge today! You can find the pledges on [CatLife](#). In an effort to help you navigate the campus resources, especially in this remote situation, the [Division of Student Affairs](#) have put these resources on their [Success Anywhere](#) site. The resources are set up around Be Informed, Be Engaged and Be Well.

TESTING

Monitoring your health and making sure you don't come to campus with any of the following symptoms is your best way to Do Your Part in minimizing the spread of COVID-19.

- Fever (100.4F+)
- Chills
- Cough (new)
- Shortness of breath (not due to chronic condition)
- Loss of taste or smell
- Muscle or body aches (not due to chronic condition)
- Unexpected fatigue - severe fatigue
- Sore throat (not due to chronic condition)
- Headache

- Diarrhea (not due to chronic condition)
- Eye redness with or without discharge
- Nasal Congestion or runny nose (not due to chronic condition)
- Nausea or Vomiting

Student Testing:

- [Asymptomatic Testing:](#)
 - UC Merced has moved to rapid on-campus screening and testing in partnership with UC Davis. For UC Merced students and employees that are **active on-site on a weekly basis.**
 - COVID-19 testing requirements:
 - Weekly – Undergraduate Students
 - Every 2 Weeks – Graduate Students, Faculty, and Staff
 - Testing participants will provide a saliva sample at a COVID-19 testing kiosk on campus.
 - The COVID-19 testing is cost-free to UC Merced students and employees and it provides rapid results in 24-48 hrs.
 - **Location**
California Room in the Terraces Center
 - **Regular Hours starting 1/25/21* (holidays excluded)**
Monday 9:00 am - 2:00 pm
Wednesday 11:00 am - 7:00 pm
Thursday 9:00 am - 2:00 pm
- [Symptomatic Testing:](#)
 - [Visit Student Health](#)
 - If you have any symptoms of COVID-19 or have been exposed to COVID-19 contact the student Health Center at 209-228-2273. A telehealth visit with a provider will be scheduled and testing options will be provided. **If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, call 911.**
 - Come to the Health and Athletics Center building near the swimming pool at your appointment time. Wear your mask and bring your student ID and your phone with your appointment barcode ready.
 - Student Health is currently using a "self-collected" test from the nose. You will collect the sample on your own. This test is more comfortable than the sample that is taken from the back of the nose. Please watch [this short video](#) from UCLA on nasal sample collection
 - Results will be sent to you via a secure message in 2-3 days.
 - All registered students are eligible, with no fee
 - Walk up testing: Back of the Health and Athletics Center building, the entrance is near the swimming pool.
 - **To protect our staff and the UCM community, please call the Student Health Center at 209-228-2273 before entering the building.**

Faculty/Staff Testing:

Castle Family Health Centers (3605 Hospital Rd, Atwater, CA 95301)

Walk-in/drive-thru testing Monday-Friday 8:00am-6:30pm

UC Merced employees need to identify themselves as employees when they register.

Call (209) 723-8504 for questions or more information.

Clearance to return to campus:

Isolate for 10 days minimum (count from the day after when your symptoms start), and 72 hours of no fever)

Contact the [COVID Response Center](#) for clearance.

DO YOUR PART – BEST SAFETY PRACTICES

As we move into a new academic year, much of what we will face is uncharted territory because of the coronavirus pandemic. However, UC Merced is a resilient community that we know will rise to the challenge. Staying the course requires a commitment from all of us to do our part to keep the community healthy and safe. Together, we will uphold UC Merced’s mission to excel in research, teaching and service, while demonstrating the concern and care for one another that have been the hallmarks of our campus.

Beginning on August 26, our campus will open on schedule with a predominantly remote model for instruction. While plans are subject to change based on recommendations from local and state public health officials, as of July 21, the decision has been made to make nearly all courses remote for at least the first four weeks of the semester, with the exception of graduate research which can be performed under strict health and safety protocols. All courses have now been updated in the course schedule and university administrators will keep students and the campus community apprised of any changes. Your Safety is our Priority. The phase-in decisions are being made with an abundance of thought and planning. Your health and safety are at the forefront of this process. We also acknowledge that changes may occur rapidly in the pandemic environment. So, we may adjust our plans if new therapies, techniques and technologies become available, or if stricter limitations are required. As we ramp up to reopening our physical campus, there are new protocols for staff, faculty, researchers and students coming to campus. These guidelines also apply to the essential workers who continued their important duties on campus throughout the stay-at-home orders.

Support Continues for Hybrid Modality. For faculty, staff, and students who continue to work, teach, and learn in a remote environment for the fall semester, we will continue to provide resources through our virtual portal, making access to websites and resources readily available. The Educational Continuity site will remain a source of information for students and faculty. Before the semester begins, students will be notified about whether their classes will be held online or on campus.

Face Coverings: In compliance with the [California Department of Public Health](#), all individuals on UC Merced property are required to wear face coverings to reduce possible exposure and help prevent the spread of COVID-19 within the Bobcat community. Please read [UC Merced’s policy](#) for details, including permitted exceptions, such as when an individual is alone in a private office or in their campus residence.

Clean and Disinfect Work Spaces: Individuals must follow all guidance provided by the University regarding cleaning and disinfection of their personal workspace and/or dorm room.

Physical Space Assessment: As we ready our spaces for certain departments to return to onsite operations, each returning department will need to examine their work environment and create a worksite plan that meets current public health and Merced County guidelines before employees who’ve been working remotely may gradually return to campus. [Click here](#) to view the checklist and once you have ensured that all requirements have been satisfied, submit your form digitally via [this online form](#) for review/approval and be sure to share the worksite plan with the employees in your group.

Health Screening: On a daily basis, and before reporting to campus, individuals must conduct a symptom survey. If you have any symptoms, stay home, report your status to the COVID Response Center, and inform your Supervisor. If you live on campus, stay in your dorm, [report your status to the COVID Response Center](#), and inform your RA. [Click here](#) for further guidance.

Online Training Module: UC Merced has developed mandatory online training that covers the concepts and resources for mitigating the spread of coronavirus on campus and among our campus community. The training is required for all students, faculty, staff and academic appointees, irrespective of whether your

job or academic activities are at a campus facility. It is mandatory under state guidance for resuming higher education activities. We cannot operate the campus on even a limited basis without requiring this training of

all of our campus constituents. Everyone must have completed the course successfully by **Sunday, August 16, 2020. If you still have not done so, please make sure to complete the course immediately.**

Other campus requirements: The campus will clearly communicate what is required on campus and will provide students with the support that they need to comply. You can find more about best practices to avoid COVID-19 [here](#).

We will start the semester fully remotely. *You should come to campus only if you have a specific need (such as seeking medical attention or other emergency services, visiting the grab-and-go food pantry, conducting essential in-person research or other essential campus work, and of course moving into campus housing).* If public health conditions improve and we can open facilities to students, we will provide updated guidance.

Refusing to comply with campus requirements will result in consequences that could include being excluded from campus altogether. Student organizations are **prohibited from holding any in-person activity** or meeting, **regardless of the location**. Student organizations who violate campus guidance, even when on private property, can be unrecognized and lose their privileges. For more information, please review the [Fall 2020 Event Approval Process](#) and [Accountability Agreement](#) all registered clubs and organizations will need to sign in order to remain an active organization, on the Office of Student Involvement website. As we receive more information or policy updates, we will update them [here](#).

Housing & Self-Sequestering: Students living in the residence halls are expected to participate in symptom monitoring for 14 days prior to their assigned move-in date. Arrival also includes a COVID-19 testing component. Please refer to the chart on the [Housing Website](#). Residents will receive more detailed emails with instructions about symptom monitoring. These emails will include information about how to use the UC Merced symptom monitoring app. To be approved to return to campus, residents must enter one response each calendar day for 14 days prior to their assigned move-in date. Please read and follow the instructions in the emails about symptom monitoring.

Sequestering means minimizing in-person interactions among students, faculty and staff, whether in the dorms, dining facilities, classrooms or other campus locations where students congregate. It also includes off-campus spaces for those students who live at home or in off-campus housing. Students should leave their on- or off-campus residences only to participate in essential activities. For UC Merced, essential activities are defined as getting food from the dining hall, participating in low-risk outdoor recreational activities, obtaining health care services, picking up mail and picking up books. Students can't leave campus during sequestration and should move in prepared with all items needed for the first 14 days on campus.

If a resident has a negative COVID test result within seven days prior to their arrival, their sequestration time will be seven days from their move-in date. If a resident is not able to get a COVID test prior to arrival, they will sequester for 14 days from their move-in date. More information about symptom monitoring and COVID testing will be emailed to residents. A symptom check must take place each day for 14 days prior to residents arrival. If you have questions or concerns, or if something is not working, please contact COVIDResponseCtr@ucmerced.edu or call 209-228-0000.

While students living off campus are not required to self-sequester/test, we recommend you do so - or quarantine for 14 days - any time you switch living locations arrive in Merced from outside the Central Valley and in particular after any air 8/26/2020 days - any time you switch living locations, arrive in Merced from outside the Central Valley, and in particular after any air travel, in accordance with [CDC guidelines](#). As such, visiting family and friends for the weekend is not advisable.

Private Gatherings & Household Grouping: For outdoor gatherings only, the current public health order allows you to form you to have 10 people, with restrictions of maintain six-feet distance from other individuals not from the same household, wash hands with soap and water for at least twenty seconds as frequently as possible or use hand sanitizer, cover coughs or sneezes (into the sleeve or elbow), regularly cleaning high-touch surfaces, and refrain from shaking hands.. When switching social bubbles, we advise an initial self-sequester or quarantine period (see above). Refer to [Merced County's COVID-19 Page](#) for more details. Student organizations *of any size* are prohibited from gathering in-person, on or off campus. For students living locally off campus, your household members (your family or your roommates) should be your primary social bubble. The **10 people guidance is a limit**, not a goal, and the smaller you keep your bubble, the better. All students must adhere to public health orders, even when interacting within groupings.

Parents, visitors and guests: For on campus properties, state guidelines prohibit visitors. Up to two parents/supporters can assist their students during move in and move out. Exceptions will also be granted for students with accessibility or care needs, students in distress, or with other special needs. Family members and supporters who reside with their students or provide caregiving or other support in on campus housing are permitted. Otherwise, parents, supporters, guests and visitors are not permitted and should stay away from campus.

Notification and contact tracing: Coronavirus is widespread throughout the United States. It is understandable that you may want to know if someone near you tested positive. Generally, we cannot disclose that information. Under federal health privacy law, we are not able to release identifying personal information, and individuals are not compelled to share this information. That being said, University Health Services will engage in rigorous contact tracing and notify individuals and groups that have had close contact with people who have tested positive. They will also work with Environment, Health & Safety to guide appropriate cleaning and disinfection of affected areas. In most cases, you will only be notified if the contract tracers determined you were in close contact (more than 15 minutes of contact with them within 6-feet distance) with the individual who tested positive. Simply working or living in the same building with someone who recently tested positive does not put you at higher risk for getting the virus. In most cases, your risk would be no greater than your everyday risk posed by community spread. In most cases when students cooperate with University Health Services and public health measures, information gathered during contact tracing will *not* be used in any disciplinary action. The university will continue to monitor the situation on campus and may issue additional emergency notifications to the campus community if there is a significant change.

If you believe you have been exposed to COVID-19, please review [this webpage](#) on what to do.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET SICK

Get help: If you have any symptoms of COVID-19 or have been exposed to COVID-19 contact the student Health Center at 209-228-2273. A telehealth visit with a provider will be scheduled and testing options will be provided. **If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, call 911.**

If you are away from campus, University Health Services may advise you on getting services where you are, if needed. If you are having difficulty breathing or other severe symptoms, you should seek help at the nearest emergency room.

Slow the spread: Please remain home and avoid contact with anyone - include those in your living situation. As much as possible, stay in a specific room and away from other people and pets. If possible, you should use a separate bathroom. The university is setting aside isolation and quarantine facilities in the Foothills residential complex. The isolation and quarantine facilities are for students diagnosed with COVID-19 and exhibiting mild symptoms, or for those awaiting the results of their test. For more guidance, please visit [this webpage](#).

You will not be required to leave campus just because you test positive; however, if you test positive you will be required to adhere to public health guidelines including providing information to assist with contact tracing. University Health Services will provide guidance. If you test positive, you will be able to resume activities once University Health Services confirmed you have recovered and are no longer infectious.

FLU SHOTS WILL BE REQUIRED

To support the health and well-being of our communities and avoid overwhelming our medical providers, the University of California has issued a systemwide executive order requiring all members of the UC community to receive an [influenza immunization](#) by November 1st, 2020. More information will be provided as we get closer to the deadline.

Be well, Bobcats!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hayley Montoya". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Hayley Montoya, M.A.

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